

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS****REGULAR MEETING****Monday, November 10, 2003**

Present: Bob Aldrich, June Bailey, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, Bobbie Harris, Janet Miller

Absent: Dennis Brunner

Also Present: Barbara Chamberlin – Director of Botanica; Marilyn Mosteller, M.S. Mitchell, Alex Lingg and Dick Weidenbach – Botanica Board of Trustees; Rosemary Weber – GreenWay Alliance; Sharon Fearey – City Council; Ed Martin – Public Works Department; Mike North – Law Department; Doug Kupper and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the regular meeting of October 13, 2003, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Discussion of Botanica Expansion**. Marilyn Mosteller, Botanica, Long Range Planning Committee, provided board members a handout packet of information that included Botanica's mission and vision statements, a map of the proposed expansion, and a draft entitled "Immediate Facility Needs Strategy for Botanica" which included timelines and action steps. Ms. Mosteller explained that the proposed expansion of Botanica would encompass a part of Sim Park that was currently underutilized.

Ms. Mosteller said the first step of the expansion process was to request Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) funds from the City's 2007 CIP in the amount of approximately \$1.8 million to extend Museum Boulevard and vacate a portion of Amidon west of Botanica so that the gardens would not be divided. She referred board members to the map and commented that one of the concepts of the plan was to expand Botanica down to the river. She said the proposed glass conservatory would be a central showpiece that would be visible from both Central Avenue and McLean Boulevard. She said it would also provide year-round gardens. She said the conservatory/visitor's center would also house a large number of meeting rooms. She stated that a series of gardens were planned including a children's garden, Asian garden, educational garden and others. She added that there would also be an area for small family gatherings as well as large corporate events.

Responding to a question from Bob Aldrich concerning vacating a portion of Amidon, Director Kupper explained that the nine acres where Botanica is currently located was formerly part of Sim Park. He said part of the expansion plan was to develop public picnic areas along the river. He added that the Police and Fire Departments had reviewed the expansion plan and felt that reconfiguration of the roads as proposed would provide better emergency access to the area. Bob Aldrich said he was concerned as to how the proposed road abandonment and extension of Museum Boulevard would affect play at Sim Park Golf Course. Ms. Mosteller stated that it would in no way interfere with the present entrance/exit to Sim Park golf course, and she added that the golf supervisor at Sim had been involved with development of the expansion plan. There was mention of the trees creating a barrier between the golf course and potential traffic.

Bob Aldrich also clarified that the picnic areas along the river would be open to the public, without paying an entrance fee. Ms. Mosteller responded that was correct and also remarked on the natural aspects of that part of the project.

Janet Miller explained to new board members that the Park Board had voted to support the Botanica expansion concept in September, 2002.

Ms. Mosteller said a lot of thought had gone into development of the proposed expansion plan and that the Botanica Board felt it would be a large draw for conventions and other national events. She concluded her presentation by requesting that the Park Board support the expansion plan and CIP funding request in conversations with their respective City Council representatives. Alex Lingg referred board members to the "Facility Needs Strategy" document and stated that any support the Park Board could provide would be appreciated.

2. **Riverside Park Improvements Update.** Ed Martin, Public Works Department, referred board members to a design drawing of the proposed renovations to Central Riverside Park. He briefly reviewed various elements of the plan and reported on the status of the following: the roundabouts at Murdock and Nims Streets were completed; removal of Murdock had been completed in order to create a large green open space and lake in the middle of the park; both upper and lower Stackman Drives had been converted into two-way roads to allow access in and around the park; the building adjacent to the Wichita Wildlife Exhibit was being converted into restrooms, which would be heated and open year round. He referred to the gazebo, which would look out over the lake and be a focal point at that end of the park; "Celebration Plaza"; the interactive zero-depth water fountain; and the installation of some type of sculptural element adjacent to the fountain area; the parking lot with the addition of "grass pavers" to expand the lot for large events; and the construction of a "strolling path" approximately ten feet wide with twelve historical markers along the path. He added that the current playground at the park would not be affected by the new construction. He concluded his presentation by commenting that Central Riverside Park had a whole different feel to it and that the strolling path tied it all together.

Bob Aldrich asked if the Wichita Wildlife Exhibit was going to be expanded. Mr. Martin responded no. Director Kupper explained that historically there have always been animals in the park. He added that the animals at the Exhibit support the City naturalists who give programs and presentations on native wildlife to schools and other organizations. In addition, he said the City did not want to appear to be competing with the Sedgwick County Zoo. Janet Miller explained that the Exhibit was currently in jeopardy and that efforts were underway to preserve it. President Bailey asked about the status of that project. Director Kupper explained to new board members that a group of citizens was trying to establish an endowment fund to pay staff and utility costs at the Exhibit; something similar to the "Friends of the Great Plains Nature Center" organization.

Mr. Martin reviewed changes at Park Villa, including installation of handicapped access to the building. He reviewed work planned and/or completed at Oak Park such as reinforcement of the stone archway, stone retaining wall and bridge, construction at the pond to help regulate water overflow and percolation, and the installation of artwork in the area.

President Bailey asked about a completion date. Mr. Martin said the original date was December 31; however, due to project delays and a change order, that date had been moved to spring of 2004. He

reported that there would be a dedication of the Nims and Murdock Street roundabouts on Saturday, November 29, 2003, at 1:00 p.m.

3. **Planeview Park Update.** Director Kupper gave a brief history of the item stating that the City had sold three acres of land at Planeview Park. He explained that since Land Water and Conservation grant funds had been used to develop the park, the City was obligated to replace the three acres with land of equal or greater value. He commented that staff had identified approximately twenty-one acres in the Planeview neighborhood, just north of Planeview Park, with an appraised value of \$48,000. He stated that the three acres sold was appraised at \$32,000. He referred board members to a handout, which was a map of the proposed replacement land. He briefly reviewed the site and stated that staff would plan landscaping and a playground area. He also mentioned tying the bike path into the area.

Responding to a question from Bob Aldrich, Director Kupper stated that the City currently owned the twenty-one acres. Bob Aldrich asked about the possibility of the City selling the land after it is turned over to the Park Department to be developed as a park. There was general discussion concerning the land sale issue.

Rosemary Weber, GreenWay Alliance, questioned if the City followed proper procedure when they sold land that was developed with Land Water and Conservation funds. Mike North, City Attorney, responded that the sale of the property was legal in accordance with City Ordinance #125. He stated that sale of the three acres did not require Park Board or Park Department approval. He also referenced State Statute #12-1301, and noted that the requirement to publish a public notice of the sale twice was also not applicable to first class Cities.

Janet Miller commented that the Park Board was distressed by the sale of parkland; that they were concerned about parkland being disposed of; and that as a Board they needed to discuss preventing what happened at Planeview from happening in the future, whether it be by the Park Board holding a public hearing on the issue or other action. There was brief discussion regarding the different categories of land under the jurisdiction of the Park Board and Park Department including land titled to the Board of Park Commissioners; land acquired prior to 1990; and land acquired after 1990.

Sharon Fearey, City Councilwoman, commented that she had discussed the possibility of establishing a zoning category for public facilities with the City Manager and John Schlegel, Director of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department.

**On motion by Craig, second by Dey, IT WAS MOVED to recommend that the City Council accept the twenty-one acres of replacement land to be developed as a park.**

Janet Miller commented that she wanted to do the right thing and that perhaps it would be better to get input from the neighborhood before making a recommendation to the City Council. Bob Aldrich asked if the City should publish a public notice before making a recommendation on the transaction. Director Kupper commented that the item was on the Park Board agenda and that it would also be on the City Council agenda, which were both available to the public. There was brief discussion concerning a development timeline for the proposed park.

**President Bailey called the question. The motion passed unanimously 6-0.**

4. **Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Update.** Director Kupper referred board members to a handout, which was a copy of the previously approved 2004-2013 CIP. He mentioned several river corridor projects, and explained that once they were completed the Park Department would be responsible for maintenance. He also referred board members to the "Projects Not Currently Scheduled" page.

Responding to a question, Director Kupper explained that GO meant General Obligation Bonds and OTHER could be anything from federal or state grant monies, other grant funds or private donations. He briefly reviewed several projects including the indoor tennis center, northeast baseball complex, and work being completed and scheduled at various recreation centers. He suggested that board members discuss district priorities and current and future projects with their respective City Council representatives to see if adjustments needed to be made to the current program.

Bob Aldrich asked how priorities were decided in reference to which parks get what improvements. Director Kupper commented that cost recovery and operations that generate revenue for the department receive high priority. He said other priorities included parking lots, athletic courts and fields, and entrance features. There was brief mention of future funding for land acquisition. Glen Dey commented on the need for the Board to develop a strategy to acquire new parkland ahead of development. Janet Miller agreed and stated that the Board needed to look at the park system as a whole. Director Kupper said he would provide individual project cut sheets at the December meeting.

5. **Spring Tour of Parks.** Director Kupper suggested that the end of March or the first part of April would be an ideal time for the tour. It was the general consensus to schedule the tour for the first or second Saturday in April (April 3 or 10, 2004).
6. **Director's Update.** Director Kupper reported briefly on the following item:
- **Lunch with the City Council.** A luncheon meeting has been scheduled with the City Council for November 18, 2004, at 12:00 p.m. in the City Council Board Room. President Bailey suggested that the Board develop a list of five priorities to address with the City Council. She requested that board members e-mail her their priorities and stated that she would compile the list and send it to each board member for review prior to the meeting. Several items discussed were developing separate zoning for park property, land acquisition, CIP funding, on-going budget, park maintenance, and recreation programming.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:15 p.m.

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June Bailey, President

ATTEST:

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Maryann Crockett, Clerk  
Recording Secretary